



Toppesfield Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting Held on Thursday 29th April 2021 Via Google Meet - 7.30pm



21/64. Attendance and Apologies for Absence:

The following Councillors were in attendance:

Councillor Alan Collard

Councillor Amanda Smith

Councillor Andrea Chinery – also represented Little Chestnuts Pre-school and The Village Hall

Councillor Boyd Page

Councillor Daisy Watson

Councillor Gemma Mackman

Also in attendance:

County Councillor David Finch

Kaaren Berry – Clerk to the Parish Council

Ann Read – Toppesfield Community Shop, Village Show & Parish Path Partnership

Nick Hasler – Toppesfield Cricket Club

Lynn Collard

Nicola Collard

Jacqueline Watson

Brian Moody – St Margaret of Antioch Parish Church Council

Trevor Wyeth – Pumphouse Community Brewery

Apologies were received from:

Councillor Chris Neale

Andy Howells – Toppesfield Community Pub

Paul Thompson – Toppesfield & Gainsford End Allotments Society

Margaret Dyson – Doctors Car Service

Stephanie Newland and Helen Kent-Jackson – St Margaret's School

21/65. Parish Council Annual Report from the Chairman

Councillor Collard gave his report – see attached Appendix A.

21/66. Organisations / group Reports

Reports were received from various organisations.

Ann Read gave reports regarding the village show, the Parish Path Partnership and Toppesfield Community Shop – see Appendix B.

Nick Hasler gave a report on behalf of Toppesfield Cricket Club - see Appendix C.

Trevor Wyeth gave the report from Pumphouse Community Brewery – see Appendix D.

Brian Moody gave the report for St Margaret of Antioch parish Church – see Appendix E.

Andrea Chinery gave the report on behalf of Little Chestnuts Preschool and Toppesfield Village Hall – see Appendix F.

Reports were also received from:

St Margaret's School – Appendix G

Toppesfield & Gainsford End Allotment Society – Appendix H

Toppesfield Community Pub – Appendix I

21/67. Post covid wellbeing

Unfortunately, our invited guest was not able to attend.

21/68. Environment and Ecology working group – An overview of group and open discussion.

Lynn Collard gave an overview of the group – see appendix J.

County Councillor David Finch reported that Essex County Council have established, Essex Climate Action Commission and their interim report has recently been published.

Projects the county council are looking at are:

- to be carbon neutral by 2030
- looking at changing street lighting to LED lighting
- more electric car charging points
- exploring the use of heat pumps in their own buildings
- solar tiles/carbon neutral tiles
- planting 375,000 trees over 5 years – 40,000 were planted last year and it is hope 50,000 will be planted this year
- hybrid working. Travel requirements and use of buildings
- possible grant schemes for switching to electric cars
- green energy
- as well as a number of other projects that are being looked at.

Trevor Wyeth reported that the brewery are looking at ways to dispose of the waste produced there, the possibility of the brewery owning their own electric vehicle for deliveries and a charging point and they could look at solar electricity but this is subject to structural engineers if panels could be placed on the brewery. Solar heat exchangers could also be looked into.

Comments/suggestions raised regarding project ideas and general observations were:

Electric care sharing/hiring – the cost of an electric car is around £30,000, therefore is this a viable project?

Dog waste bins – one is required for Harrow Hill and the fact that people put their plastic bags in the grit bin.

The new Cust Hall bridge is modern and not in keeping with an old village.

The crash extension barrier is unsightly – there was not one in place prior to the works so why is one needed now? Also there is a mishmash of street furniture around it.

Could there be an eco-centre in the park and possibly build animal homes to get the children involved.

Adopt a street sign to clean them up and paint them – this will help tidy the village up.

21/69. Time and date of next Parish Council Meeting

The next Parish Council meeting will be on the 6th May 2021 at 7.30pm. This will be the Annual Parish Council Meeting.

21/70. Close

The meeting closed at 9.10pm

Appendix A

Chair's report to Annual Parish Meeting 29 April 2021

It goes without saying that the past year has been an exceptional one. In 2020 we were not able to hold an Annual Parish Meeting; but don't worry, I am not going to give a review of the 2019-2020 year as well as the past 12 months.

I will start with the impact of and response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The PC facilitated the formation of the Toppesfield & Gainsford End Response Group last year on 12 March at a short notice meeting at the Green Man. By the time the first lockdown came into effect on 23rd March we had the Group set up. Hotlines were in place for general enquiries, prescription services, shop orders as well as a wellbeing line, staffed by 2 qualified village residents. The shop had moved quickly to stock up and by the end of the month had spent something in the region £10,000 on goods; despite this, I am assured that their stocking was not the cause of the Great Toilet Roll Shortage of last spring.

All in all I think we can all agree that we saw the best of the village over that period. Many people came forward to undertake a variety of tasks from collecting prescriptions to walking dogs; from volunteering in the shop to delivering shopping to people's doors; manning the phones to checking on neighbours; the Green Man delivered meals to the most in need; thanks to a donation of £2,500 from a resident the parish council was able to provide some food parcels where needed. There are too many people to thank and acknowledge individually but we all know who they were and we thank them all sincerely.

Despite the lockdowns last year there has still been a fair bit going on. I am just going to highlight some of the things the Parish Council has been doing with your money; if anyone would like more information please get in touch with us via Kaaren, our clerk.

- The Neighbourhood Plan proceeded, albeit more slowly than planned, under Nigel Meeks leadership. The open public meeting scheduled for April last year could not take place and is being rescheduled for late summer. This will be the community's opportunity to see what has been done so far and make comments and observations. This is an important exercise and one which will give us more control over what our village will look like in the future. Nigel has stepped back from his role due to work pressures and we are pleased that David Oxnam has agreed to take on the leadership. Look out for details over the coming months;
- Work took place on both playing fields. In Gainsford End work was completed on the smart new swings and in Toppesfield some repairs and minor works were undertaken to ensure that the health and safety recommendations of RoSPA were addressed;
- A new Environment and Ecology working group was set up under the auspices of the parish council (more about that later);
- New benches were sited on Gainsford End hill (to replace an existing bench that had fallen into disrepair) and in the Toppesfield playing field. In addition a bench was installed in the parish owned land behind the pub in memory of Dave Dyson, who sadly passed away early in April 2020. It is appropriate here to note all the work that Dave did in the village over the years. He was a long-time councillor, was a founder member of the shop and of TCP and was involved with so much that went on in Toppesfield. The village will miss his energy and enthusiasm.
- The Ultra-Fast Broadband Project, which was effectively underwritten by the parish council was pretty well completed last year (there are one or two small loose ends) and Toppesfield now has one of the fastest broadband provisions in the country – just in time for all that home working;
- The parish council made grants to help with the winter tree planting programme, to the shop to help with the additional pressures it had last year, and we funded the purchase of 2 laptops for the Friends of St Margaret's. These were to be used by Toppesfield children having difficulties accessing the on-line lessons during lockdown;

- Progress has been made with the car park in Park Lane. The car that had been dumped there has recently and at long last (it had been there for almost 3 years) been removed. The layout has been amended so that parking is now only possible at the front of the area but with careful parking there should be spaces for up to 5 vehicles. Unfortunately this has been a long and frustrating exercise, not to say expensive. It is such a shame that the resident involved would only act when presented with a solicitor's letter. I want to thank Cllr Page for all his efforts with the car park and know he will be pleased that this topic won't have to be raised again at council meetings;
- Two new village signs at the entrances to Toppesfield have just been installed by a group of residents led by Cllr Page. They are a great improvement on those that have been replaced and we are optimistic that they will last longer;
- A successful litter-pick was completed on 3 April and we had a record turnout of 28 parishioners who collected a mountain of rubbish;
- The parish council has lost 2 members during 2020 with Andrew Bull and Robert Stafford-Baker standing down but they have been replaced by new councillors Gemma Mackman and Daisy Watson. We thank Andrew and Robert for their work on the council and welcome Daisy and Gemma. For those of you who follow these things, you will note that the council now has a majority female composition; as far as I am aware this is the first time since parish councils were created in 1895 that this has been the case in Toppesfield;
- And finally, just to show that we also think of our 4-legged friends, 2 new dog poo bins have been installed. I will only say that it is a shame that a small number of dog owners don't seem to understand that they are not decorative but meant to be used.

In 2021 we hope to see more of our traditional activities take place and the council will be keen to support steps back to some stability.

For the forthcoming year, in addition to the usual range of activities, the parish council is working on some specific projects including the possible purchase of the GM barn and the creation of a suitable parish office as well as a multi-use room. We are also exploring the setting up of a community fund for the village and we want to push the agenda on environmental issues given the climate crisis we face – but more on that in a few minutes.

Briefly, with regard to finance, the council financial statements can be found on our website or please ask our clerk for a copy. The parish precept for last year was £17,253 and for the coming year will be £17,493. This is an increase of 1.3% or an increase of about 14p per month for a band D dwelling. I think that we can all look back over the past 12 months and acknowledge that we are fortunate to live in such a village as Toppesfield & Gainsford End. There are many that look at what we have done and what we have and are amazed such a small community can achieve so much.

Finally, I would like to thank my colleagues on the parish council for all that they do; they are a pleasure to work with and a special thanks to our clerk Kaaren Berry, without whom I can honestly say that the whole show would probably come to a messy end. Thank you Kaaren.

Appendix B

Toppesfield and Gainsford End Village Show 2020

Report for Parish Meeting on 29th April 2021 via Zoom

In March last year I appealed for help in running the show as I have been organising it for 45 years and was keen to hand it on.

A meeting was arranged for 20th March 2020 in the village hall for anyone interested in helping with the show which had been provisionally booked for Sat 19th September 2020.

Sadly Covid-19 arrived, and the meeting did not happen nor did the show.

I am now looking towards this year and as yet not sure what the situation will be regarding Covid restrictions but hopefully we might have a show in September.

Just so you are aware, I collected all the cups and awards in last September and they are in my loft.

Ann Read

Parish Paths Partnership

Report for Annual Parish Meeting 29th April 2021 Zoom

The footpaths have really come into their own as the restrictions of covid hit. The wonderful weather and our beautiful parish became a lifeline for people to get out for their daily exercise and the contact with the natural world. However, because of the restrictions I was not able to organise any walks.

I have been keeping an eye on the footpaths and keep trying to get things done. Several diversion were agreed two years ago but as yet the new signage has not been put up and several of the way marker posts have fallen over as the wood has rotted. The highways people are aware of this.

The bridge over the brook at the bottom behind Ollivers was in a poor state and the bridge has been repaired but soon after the rainfall took its toll and the area flooded and bridge became unstable as was not firmly attached to the banks. This has happened again this Winter and Highways are dealing with it.

The other area of concern is the very boggy area near the Carp Lakes at Gt Yeldham. This is a Toppesfield footpath and is right on the boundary of our parish with Great Yeldham parish. The boggy area is almost impassable in the Winter and the path by the lake has been unofficially diverted plus the new owner has put up fencing and very aggressive dogs race up and down and are most intimidating. Also, the owner himself can be quite disagreeable. Both Braintree Council and Highways have inspected the site and it is being looked at.

Do let me know if you come across any problems with the footpaths and I will see what I can do.

Ann Read

P3 officer for Toppesfield Parish Council.

27th April 2021

Toppesfield Community Shop

Report for Annual Parish Meeting April 29th 2021

The coming of Covid -19 has had a huge impact on the shop. Lock down meant that most of our volunteers were not available and Trisha Roberts stepped in to train new volunteers, get stock, set up a system of deliveries, stock shelves and clean the shop every afternoon after the shop was closed. The shop was open in the mornings only and service was at the door. The takings in the shop rocketed.

In June Trisha handed the running of the shop back to the committee and it became apparent that a manager was needed to organise the day to day running of the shop. And so, a manager was

appointed. As restrictions eased a little some of the original volunteers were able to return and we extended the shop hours to 3.30 pm. Gradually as customers were able to access online deliveries and go into shops to do their shopping so takings have fallen.

We have for many years held a monthly market but were not able to do so during the lock down however we did have a fantastic Christmas market with a marquee attached to the village hall making space for social distancing for the stall holders and strict monitoring of the numbers of customers as well as track and trace. A huge effort but so worth it. As we were not allowed to hold the usual tree lighting and gathering outside the pub, I think everyone enjoyed a taste of Christmas.

After Christmas again another lock down and because of lack of volunteers we reverted to just being open in the mornings. However, since April we have extended the hours again to 3.30 pm. Several of our regular volunteers have now returned to work so we are hoping to recruit some new ones. We were very lucky that during whole Covid time our Post Office lady Chris has come each week which has been fantastic.

On the business side we have updated the status of the shop from an Industrial & Providence Society to a Community Benefit Society. We have also given grants to The School towards their sensory garden, Toppesfield Church Bell Ringers towards new bell ropes, The Green Man to improve kitchen equipment The Pumphouse Brewery for new equipment and to The Environmental Group towards their tree planting project.

Looking to the future there are very exiting plans to improve all the facilities in the village and we hope this will include the shop.

Ann Read
Chairman

27th April 2021

Appendix C



Toppesfield Cricket Club Annual Report 2021

Last season was a non-starter although when restrictions allowed, we were able to have a couple of evening training net sessions and even started one match which unfortunately was abandoned due to rain.

Disappointing, as we had attracted a couple of new members, newcomers to the village, but unfortunately due to the circumstances not ideal to get them known amongst the existing members.

So, we look forward to the season ahead as we are now able to return to playing matches and train albeit in-line with ECB (England & Wales Cricket Board) guidelines, although there are restrictions that we must adhere to. And its important we do or it could affect our affiliation to the ECB which is not in our interest.

Among those restrictions include, changing rooms out of bounds, club house closed, no car sharing, no food, come ready changed for matches, sanitising products available, and no supporters.

So, for the season ahead. There was genuine concern from all village cricket clubs that with a such a lengthy lay off that people suddenly had all this time and may find other things to occupy themselves. After all, cricket is a lengthy game and even in the shortened version that we play i.e. 20 over aside matches still are quite time consuming.

Feelers were put out to our membership and quite pleasingly we had a good level of interest, so things are looking positive.

Pre-season work on the wicket started a few weeks back and within the next couple of weeks we will recommence our Thursday evening training net sessions.

We have four matches confirmed so far with one new team, High St Rangers from Halstead and we be looking for a couple more fixtures to add to them. We are hopeful to organise the family 'Crinders' day at some point, possibly when all the restrictions are lifted, fingers crossed after June 21st. This is an important fund raiser for the club.

Cricket Clubs needs at present?

Pleasing to see we have some new members, but we do need more!

We need to be in a position to have something to attract people to play for us, and that involves improving our facilities.

One project we have embarked on last year and have re-energised this year is to introduce an artificial practice / training wicket at the playing field. We not only see this as improving the club's facilities for practice / training but also something that the wider community can make use of and will be made available to all. Let's hope to encourage particularly the young, but any age to have a go at cricket.

There is nothing more I would love to see in the future is that of a youth team, maybe a lady's team, functioning alongside our current team.

But for that to happen we need growth, for growth we need a strong membership, to create a strong membership we need something to offer. i.e. better facilities are a start.

As you can imagine artificial playing surfaces are not cheap (indicative cost at £5000) and that's where we will need financial support.

A water supply in the pavilion is a need. We spend a huge number of hours preparing and creating the wicket and if we are going to attract teams to play at Toppesfield we must have a safe and suitable wicket to play on. We suffer with lengthy dry spells, as we did the year before last and surprisingly currently experiencing cracks starting to open up with the lack of rain during April. As you can imagine that creates a safety issue when you have a cricket ball whistling down at you! Only one way to stop this, and that is to water the wicket. As we don't currently have that ability to do this, this could unfortunately lead to matches being postponed or playing the fixture away instead.

Remember, the Cricket Club has been a good revenue stream for the pub over the years so that's not an ideal scenario. If the club can grow this can only be good news for the community ventures in the village.

Improved storage is a need. We currently store all our ground equipment inside the pavilion which is far from ideal, after all this is ultimately a community building and if we were able to get better facilities i.e. water, maybe even toilets, then this building could have far more appeal for other community groups to use.

So that gives you a flavour of where the Cricket Club is at present, any questions?

Nick Hasler

On behalf of Toppesfield Cricket Club.

29.04.21

Appendix D



PUMPHOUSE COMMUNITY BREWERY REPORT TO ANNUAL PARISH MEETING TOPPESFIELD AND GAINSFORD END, 2021

The key influences and events over the last year were:

- The COVID-19 pandemic caused a protracted period of uncertainty.
- Sales of draught beer to pubs dropped to zero as a result of lock down.
- We were forced to focus on finding new outlets for bottled beer.
- In an attempt to increase revenue, we also began to sell Toppesfield wine and snacks from the brewery shop, and introduced a loyalty card scheme.
- We are currently in the process of re-branding and have a new transactional website under construction, funded by Braintree District Council (BDC).
- Aaron and Kaaren were placed on flexible furlough and in October, we unfortunately had to lay off the assistant brewer Bill Holland.
- We survived through the good fortune of grants, including from the Prince's Countryside Fund, the Government's COVID grant scheme, and the Social Fund.

At the beginning of 2021 our financial situation was precarious. The effect of successive lockdowns was to completely undermine our previous focus on sales of draught beer to pubs, and whilst they were never the most cost effective outlet, they had been our main source of income. We placed Aaron and Kaaren on flexible furlough, with an inevitable reduction in our capacity to produce beer. However, this was more closely in line with sales, as we were forced to change our focus to selling bottled and draught beer from the brewery shop, and such sales have steadily increased recently. Tina Mason and Aaron Osborne have applied for personal licences so that they can sell at markets etc.

We are developing sales to retail outlets and have a good relationship with Poplar Nurseries in Marks Tey. We have a group of dedicated fans in High Easter who have been placing regular orders. In the world of on-line retail, our bottled beer is available for sale on Amazon, on the CAMRA 'Brew2you' on-line shop, and on 'ClickitLocal', a sales portal introduced to us by BDC. We also have a dedicated following on facebook.

Crucial grant funding was received from the Prince's Countryside Fund, The Hopkins Plunkett Communities Scheme, who awarded us a grant for new bottling equipment, and SEBCOR, who are covering the cost of our re-branding (see below). We are also benefitting from the Government sponsored 'Additional Restrictions Grant' through Braintree District Council, and we received a small grant from the Village Shop.

For the future, we aim to raise and update our profile through re-branding and a new transactional website. Both are currently under development and should be available to roll out by the end of May. Our reaction to initial viewings of both as they are developed, are that they appear very professional, modern, vibrant and eye catching.

Finally, we urge all parishioners to support the brewery more actively; the village will benefit from a successful brewery.

Future Plans

Our immediate objective must be to restore our financial position to match or exceed the strong position it was in before the pandemic. As we look forward through 2021 into 2022, we need to continue to raise our social and market profile, and to further develop bottle sales, whilst continuing to satisfy the need for

draught beer of the pubs that are our traditional bedrock, especially The Green Man. This will necessitate a review of our pricing structure later in 2021.

As we achieve this objective, we should be able to increase productivity by re-employing a brewing assistant.

Environmental Impact and Climate Change

One ongoing problem that impacts on the immediate environment around the brewery is the disposal of brewing waste; we need a reliable and long-term solution to this problem.

The means of delivery of draught beer kegs to pubs remains problematic, although we have had generous offers of help in this respect from shareholders. The ultimate solution would be for the brewery to own a vehicle. Ideally this would be an electric vehicle with charging point, to minimise environmental impact.

As regards amelioration of the effects of climate change, we will keep the green credentials of our electricity supplier under review. On the broader front, the opposed roof of the middle section of the barn faces South (incidentally, so does the front of the Green Man) and would be ideal for the installation of solar panels to generate electricity, and solar heat exchangers to supplement water heating. During sunny weather such as recently, the latter could provide all the hot water necessary for one days brewing, but would necessitate installation of a circulatory system and a sufficiently large water tank. The roofs of the larger end section of the barn could also accommodate solar panels. Advice would be needed from a structural engineer as to whether or not the roofs are strong enough to support these features. However, both systems, once installed, would provide strong financial benefits to the brewery and indirectly to the community.

The third element of a green energy system for the brewery, or any other community asset, would be an air or ground source heat pump. These can provide for a complete heating or cooling system. However, they are expensive to install, to run and to maintain.

Trevor Wyeth, Chair
Pumphouse Community Brewery Limited
29th April 2021

Appendix E

ST MARGARET OF ANTIOCH TOPPESFIELD PARISH CHURCH Report for annual Parish Meeting

As with nearly all village organisations the Coronavirus epidemic had a big impact on the church's activities in 2020. From late March until the end of June the church doors had to be closed for all purposes and we were only allowed to open again in July with strict guidelines on social distancing, no singing, no moving about and so on. We weren't able to celebrate Mothering Sunday or Easter in church, but at least we had a Harvest Festival. Thanks to everyone who donated items (and continue to do so through the shop) for the food bank.

While we couldn't use our churches our rector Rev Liz arranged on-line services on Zoom, Facebook and YouTube and a large number of people joined together for worship in this new way.

Services began again in July and continued until November and there were two hastily rearranged weddings, but then again, we had to close the doors and apart from two weeks at the beginning of December no more services were possible until Easter Day this year. Although the church was

beautifully decorated for Christmas no one was able to come in for our traditional carol service and Christmas celebrations.

We have though been able to open the church for one morning each week- Wednesday morning - for private prayer, and people have found this a valuable time to call in for a few moments of quiet.

As well as stopping us worship in church the virus also prevented us holding any of our fundraising events. For the first time for many years there was no Church Fete and no Supper Auction. So, finances became very fragile. Thanks to a number of people making online donations, we were able to keep the deficit for the year down to about £2500, but we couldn't begin to think about any expenditure on the building itself.

Despite the difficulties the village has helped in many ways. A big thank you to the team of volunteers who tidied up the churchyard. Their work made a big difference to its appearance and has been warmly welcomed by all who visit to tend graves or just walk through to the shop or school. I'm very pleased that they have offered to continue and take responsibility for keeping the churchyard beautiful this year. Also, a big thank you to Richard Evers who has kept the clock striking throughout the year and to Dusty Millar who has climbed the tower to raise flags at the appropriate times. Thanks also to Wendy Turner and others who have arranged flowers when it has been possible.

Now we are looking forward to our pattern of services returning to normal. Weekly services have already begun, albeit with social distancing and no singing etc. We have also had the good news that we will have a voluntary Curate from September. Caroline Brown will be ordained Priest in September and will work part time each week in Toppesfield. You will have the chance to meet her this summer. Our fundraising events start again this July 3rd with the Church Fete taking place in the churchyard and Caroline is helping to organise it. Also, we hope that if regulations allow, we can hold the Supper Auction in November.

Brian Moody April 2021

Appendix F



Little Chestnuts pre-school annual report 2021

It has been a strange year for Little Chestnuts Pre-school, as it has for many, but again our staff, children and their families have shown their support and resilience, as we have made changes to the way we run our sessions to comply to Covid restrictions.

We have had to close our doors only twice once for lock down and the second just before Christmas due to staffing.

When we were closed or had to reduce our opening times, we provided online learning, phonics, maths, and story time we also enjoyed Didi dance lessons via Zoom.

This was a fantastic way to keep connected to the children and their families ensuring we provided as much support as possible.

When schools were closed we stayed open, although we had to reduce our hours so that we could home school our own children we provided a fun and safe environment and kept some sort of normality for us all.

We are now open full hours and we have said hello to two new families this term, and we are now full every day.

This term is always busy as we work alongside the primary schools to ensure the children leaving us in July have a smooth transition to big school.

We have been unable to organise large fundraising events, but we did have a Christmas raffle. Our planned Circus event has been postponed until 19th June 2022 to ensure we can make this a fun filled family event. So please save the date and look for more information in the village magazine and on our social media.

As our school year comes to an end, we are looking forward to lots of outside play, walks around the village and planting vegetables and flowers in the allotment.

We will also be advertising and hopefully holding open mornings for those who are joining us or looking for a pre-school in September.

We would like to say thank you to our families, friends, and the staff at Little Chestnuts for their continued support.

Little Chestnuts Pre-school management committee.



Toppesfield Village Hall Management Committee.

Annual report 2021

This has been a quiet year for the village hall with most hirers unable to continue with their activities and clubs.

Fortunately, Little Chestnuts Pre-school has remained open and has continued to hire and use our Village Hall.

In December, the shop held their Christmas market, in between lockdowns. We liaised with the shop committee to provide risk assessments and the relevant signage and all necessary hygiene requirements to enable this to go ahead.

We have received several grants from the local government, which has helped us to cover our enforced losses, and to maintain and continue to improve the hall. This includes having the main floor and stage floor refurbished over the Easter holidays. All outside lighting has been upgraded including the original 'lamppost'.

We are looking to replace some equipment such as the fridge and ladders, and to find a better way to store the chairs.

Looking forward we are hoping that hirers return from the 17th May if the Government roadmap allows. We are eager to see the hall being used by the community and new hirers once again, and in our 60th year to celebrate this village asset achieved from the enduring efforts of many past residents.

Toppesfield Village Hall Management Committee.



Appendix G

St. Margaret's C of E Primary School Annual Overview

Who would ever have imagined the last 12 months looking the way they did? We were, of course, in a national lockdown 12 months ago. At that point, St. Margaret's worked alongside Ridgewell CofE Primary School, Belchamp St. Paul CofE Primary School and Colne Engaine CofE Primary School to create a hub enabling the children of key workers to access on site provision. 13 children from across the schools accessed this provision. Whilst providing this support, we also provided remote learning for pupils learning from home.

In June, we welcomed back some children from reception, year 1 and nearly all of year 6. It was lovely to see some children back in school, but we continued to miss the children that were still accessing their learning remotely.

It was wonderful to have a full school in September for the Autumn Term. We welcomed 7 new pupils into our reception class, and they have settled into school beautifully. We invited back our year 6 leavers for pizza and presentations as we were unable to give them the usual send off in July. Of course, things were not back to normal and we had to look at new ways of doing things. For example, we celebrated our Harvest Festival by publishing a video to a private YouTube channel and did the same for our Christmas production. We carried out parents evening via telephone and had to adapt to working with bubbles. It has been a great challenge for the children to have to be separate from their friends in the school.

When we were placed in lockdown again in January, we provided on site provision for 21 children as well as providing an improved remote education offer for those learning from home. We had set up

Google Classroom accounts for all pupils, funded by the DfE, which made the provision of learning a lot easier. As this is now set up, we are continuing to use the resource in school to support our computing curriculum.

Despite the pandemic, we have continued to move forward with our plans for school improvement and have released a new vision and values; have developed our ICT infrastructure and hardware to improve our computing curriculum delivery and have rolled out a new curriculum to name but a few of our changes. All of this along, with the pandemic, has certainly kept us on our toes!

We hope that the next 12 months will be a lot calmer and we will get back to normality. We cannot commend the children enough for the resilience they have shown during the pandemic. They have truly been an inspiration to us all.

Next steps:

We have lots of plans for the next 12 months. Some of these are:

- Designing and installing a sensory and reflection garden
- Creating a nurture room
- Creating outside reading zones, including installing outdoor bookcases
- Updating our reading schemes across the school, including purchasing new books.

All of these projects will help support the children both emotionally and academically. We look forward to updating on our achievements next year.



Appendix H

Toppesfield Allotments

Through the lockdown of last year and through to spring so far, we allotmenters have had a lifeline and refuge, which has been a great benefit to us all as well as for exercise and peacefulness, not to mention mental health, not just for the allotment holders but for all the parishioners that take exercise in the facility with daily walks with their dogs, it truly is a big asset for the Toppesfield community. Produce aplenty was grown last season, so we are hoping for a cornucopia of produce this year. We started with a flourish of daffodils in March this year with possibly the best show ever, thanks to the Moody's for their donation of bulbs some 9 years ago.

There has been a donation from Richard van Dulken BDC for works to be carried out for a shelter to dive under when we have the inevitable thunderstorms and autumn inclement weather, we are actively looking for further funding as we will need to have a fund of around £600 to complete the project so any offers of funding will be greatly accepted.

Last autumn a group of allotmenters made a start on clearing the Church Graveyard, which resulted in spring bulbs poking their heads through the weed and bramble-free site. A big improvement is visible to all that walk the site and visitors to the church and grounds. There are further working parties going ahead this month.

Thanks to Rob Stafford-Baker, Rae & Ann Syder, Darren, Mick Francis, Dave Chapman, Richard and Julia Evers, Andy Daines, and anyone else that I have forgotten.

The allotments remain full - long may it last with a waiting list.

If you haven't visited the site recently, please do so. Thanks go to TPC for grant support for water that goes a long way to making a sustainable allotment.

One final thank you to my wife Clare who manages the accounts and admin without any grumbles and has done so for the last 10 years.

Look out for 'Tommo's Tips' in the Newsletter

Paul Thompson Chair

Appendix I

TCP 2020/21

Even those of us without a raging thirst will have noticed the pub was closed to visitors for the majority of the last 12 months in line with government guidelines.

David and Paul have offered a takeaway service whenever possible and have been very active in helping residents in delivering food, shopping, and generally in supporting those isolated where they could during the worst of the pandemic. They are not the best at promoting themselves and contribute without seeking reward, so much of their efforts go un-noticed, they are to be thanked greatly for their work. The pub has been redecorated in conjunction with several local residents and customers, and you will notice that we have replaced many of the rotting windows.

There isn't much cash going spare at TCP or with the tenants as trading has been down 60% in the financial year, what we have we have spent wisely! Without the cost of new windows TCP made a small profit, more of this at our AGM.

There is a knock-on effect to the finances of the brewery, and we have not been able to instigate any services or enhanced offerings.

Current Issues

Re-opening is the current challenge where all related parties have to invest to start the wheels turning again with the belief that there will be no subsequent lockdowns following shortly. So far there has been a good level of custom at the pub, the heated tents and garden tables have often been full; some patience was needed in the first few days in waiting for food and drink as everything has to be brought to the door; every day is a new experience, and the process has sped up bringing people back regularly.

Forthcoming Year

Getting footfall to return often after being used to being at home will be the issue. The pub has a lot of enhancements now with two very keen tenants, we need to remind ourselves how good the food and drink was before lockdown.

Environment and Ecology

The pub is an insulation and heating nightmare. We have made enquiries to obtain grant aid to, not all of it applies to our type of business, however sorting the issue is a must.

Appendix J

Report of Environment & Ecology Working Group

The E&E group was set up in 2020...just before the first Covid lockdown.

This made it difficult to get much momentum early on but despite this we were able to plant 40 good sized trees. These are mainly on Mortlock land with others at Grass Green and Meads. All seem to have taken well and are being monitored for any damage or for watering needs.

Funding was received from:

- Toppesfield Parish Council;
- Toppesfield Community Stores;
- District Councillor Richard van Dulken's Discretionary Grant Fund;
- Private donations.

We are grateful to each of them.

We also received support from Shaun Taylor at BDC who provided valuable advice and a mixture of support through trees and planting aids (ties, protectors etc).

For the forthcoming year we aim, all being well:

- to plant a further 60 trees
- look at planting bee-friendly wildflowers along some verges;
- examine ways to provide a facility for recycling difficult items such as crisp packets, tetrapaks etc;
- explore possibilities for refilling;

Longer term we could look at community energy possibilities, for example to support the public and community owned buildings in the village and an electric car club.

What we really need to do is pursue the ways that we can make the biggest impact on addressing the climate crisis.

Lynn Collard